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GEORGE WILLIAM BROWNING

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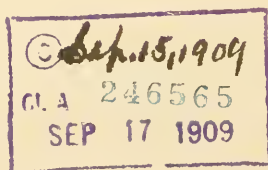
GEORGE WILLIAM BROWNING

1909

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*We have known War, and its ensanguined sights,
Pain's pallid harvest, Death's divine release;
Hushed are the guns; sheathed is the sword that smites;
Let us give thanks for Peace!*

*We have known Want—the lean wolf—at the door;
Aye, we have known him at the hearth intrude;
Let us give thanks from shore to utmost shore
That there is plenitude!*

*We have known Sorrow—haply know it still;
Let us give reverent thanks that there is One
Whose strength unfailing and whose loving will
We all may lean upon!*

SONG OF THE SHIPS

*The great ships go a-shouldering
Along my line of shore;
The little ships like sea-gulls fly
Under the blue tent of the sky,
And some will lie a-mouldering,
Where phosphor lights are smouldering,
And sail no more, no more !*

Spruce and trig
Is yon bounding brig ;—
“Whither away, my master ?”
“O just for a bit of a jaunty trip,
From the lazy ooze of Salem slip
To where the long tides roar and rip
Round the coral keys
Of the outer seas,
And the combers cry ‘disaster !’
Out and up with the topsail there !
There’s plenty of God’s free briny air
To crowd her a little faster !”

Ah, like a lark
Dips yonder bark,—
 Poises and dips and rises!
“Whither away?”
“To the clear blue day,
And the Lost Lagoon
Where the flame of noon
 Is full of rapt surprises,
And the tropic moon
As it swings a-swoon,
 Entangles and entices.”

It's “Champ! champ! champ!”
Goes the wheezy tramp,
 With her funnels low and raky;
“Whither away?” “Well, the good Lord knows
Where we'll land if it up and blows,
For the keel is foul (that's one of our woes),
 And the screw is mighty shaky;
But we'll weather to port although it be
Under the gray-green roof of the sea,
And we'll warp to the pier
With a rouse of cheer
 Though queer be the pier and quaky.”

Like an arrowy shaft
From fore to aft
 Onward urges the liner;
“Whither away?” Strong comes the hail—
“O’er creamy crest and o’er beryl vale
To the gates of the Ultimate East we sail
Where the rose abides and the nightingale
 Sits caroling—none diviner.
A myriad hopes—not a wraith of doubt—
Throb between our decks as we hurtle out;
And the mind and the shaping hand of man,
Since the ancient surge of Time began,
 Ne’er fashioned a splendor finer.”

With sparkling spar
Glides the man-o’-war,
 Her great-gunned turrets towering;
“Whither away?” “To the verge of earth
To guard the rights of the free of birth,
And give them a taste of our Yankee mirth
 Wherever the foe be lowering;
And should it come to the last appeal,
To the cruel chrism of fire and steel,

Be it man on bridge, in hold, at wheel,
There'll be no caitiff cowering!"

*And so the ships go shouldering
Along my line of shore,
And whether they dare the threat of the Horn,
Or make for the Golden Isles of Morn,
Under the sapphire tent of sky,
Some will range back by and by,
And some will lie a-mouldering,
Where phosphor lights are smouldering,
And sail no more, no more!*

THE FLAG TO THE WIND

What is the word of the Flag
To the world-wide wanderer, Wind,
Now that valley and crag
Are fair with the flush of May,
Now that the boughs once thinned
By the cruel hand of the frost,
Laughing in leaf, are tossed
In the sunny face of the day?
Flung over valley and crag,
This is the word of the flag:

“Far in the years that are gone,
In freedom I had my birth,
Yet I am young as the dawn
Or the fresh Maytime of earth.
I have outlived my fears
In the stress of the wheeling years,—
Until, in my strength, I feel,
With my Stripes and my gathering Stars,
That I stand for a nation’s weal
Supreme o’er the roar of wars.

Since I to the morn unfurled
Over this fair, new world,
Mine has it been to urge
The press of the patriot surge,
Whether it swept the plain
In the stormy wake of Wayne,
Or leaped on the parapet
At the shout of Lafayette.
Proud did I float on high
At Lawrence's valiant cry,
And waved in glory again
When Decatur sailed the main;
From the banks of the Rio Grande
I tossed in the face of the foe,
Till I took my triumph stand
On the walls of Mexico;
And when the North and the South,
Sworn brothers, drew apart,
When love was withered by drouth,
And hate was the flower of the heart,
Through ways of passion and pain,
Through waste of life and of lands,

Back did I lead again
To the brotherly clasping of hands.
Ne'er did my courage fail
In the doubtful days and dark,
Though under the fiery gale
The loved of the land grew stark.
I, who had seen the light
In the eyes of Washington,
Had faith that the gloom of the night
Would yield once more to the sun;
So, rent and riven and torn,
Did I cheer the war-ranks worn,
Till the silent soldier came,
The man of the deathless name,
Who brought from the strife release
And the lovely lilies of Peace.
And when the trump of War
Pealed in the dawn once more,
And far Corregidor,
By the warm Philippine shore,
Hearkened our guns proclaim
The end of a rule of shame,

And when the fairest isle
In the surge of the Carib main
Cruelly crushed too long
By Spanish greed and guile,
Listed the swell of the strain
Of our mighty battle-song,
A hail did I fling to all
Of the free who erst were thrall:

“ ‘Out of the wrong shall come right;
Out of the darkness the light!’—
Such is the message I bear
Ever abroad on the air.
I stand for the hearth and home,
For our precious mother Earth,
For her leagues of fertile loam,
And her mountains great of girth;
O’er the living and dead I wave,
Blessing the cradle and grave;
And for none my folds are tossed
With a more exultant pride
Than for those whose lives were lost,
Than for those who bravely died

That the nation might abide,
And the right be glorified.

“Then blow, O Wind, where ye will,
This errand to fulfill!
Say thou of the sleeping ones:
‘Ye died for the land of your love;’
Say thou to her living sons:
‘Strive ye to keep her true,
Spotless before her God above
For the nations of earth to view;
True to her highest trust,
Untouched by the taint of greed,
Unsoiled by all the canker and lust
That the low ambitions breed;
One people faithful and free
From the marge of the sea to the sea!’ ”

Flung over valley and crag,
Fair, or tattered and thinned,
Such is the word of the Flag,
The word of the Flag to the Wind.

THE WAY TO THE NEUTRAL GROUND

Out of the Tory city

In the moonless murk of the night,
Where few knew patriot pity,

We slipped in our sudden flight.
We led our steeds from the thicket
Where we left them muzzle-bound,
And sped toward the outmost picket,—
The way to the Neutral Ground.

We did not flag nor falter—

A spy may not drowse nor drift,
For capture means the halter,
A bough, and a speedy shrift.
With a faint “pad! pad!” on the gravel
Did our horses’ hoof-beats sound;
Oh, we had good cause to travel
The way to the Neutral Ground!

From a cheery tavern ingle
The light of a log fire flowed,
As we flashed, our cheeks a-tingle,
Down a dip of the Kingsbridge Road;
But we had not dared to tarry
Had the cup been garland-crowned;
On that path one had best be wary,—
The way to the Neutral Ground.

A challenge rude and ringing;
A mocking, back-flung word,
And a bullet's vicious singing
Above as we onward spurred.
Past the rugged Morris highland,
Where the British cannon frowned,
We dashed up the wood-capped island,—
The way to the Neutral Ground.

This was where the swart Waldeckers
Burst in through the oak and pine,
And the bloody Hessian wreckers
Fell foul of the patriot line;
Where the Pennsylvania yeomen,
Till a cordon girt them round,
Stood staunch 'gainst the foreign foemen,—
The way to the Neutral Ground.

The last dark danger scorning,
We shortened the naked sword,
As we came, ere the lift of morning,
To the Spuyten Duyvil ford.
Charge!—Did their volley blind us?
Nay, but a forward bound,
And lo, we had left behind us
The way to the Neutral Ground!

Death? We have known it nearer
In foray and open fight,
But the black dread ne'er spoke clearer
Than out of that murky night.
Still oft by our campfires biding
We start at some sudden sound,
For in dreams we've been riding,—riding,—
The way to the Neutral Ground!

BALLAD OF "OLD GLORY"

(AUGUST, 1777)

*Hear the story
Of "Old Glory,—"
How the flag was first unfurled
Above the land
By a dauntless band
In the heart of a wooded world.*

'Twas the red August light
That brooded over the sky;
And the dog-star glowered by night
With its baleful, gory eye;
And the leaguers cried, "if ye're stubborn still,
Forsooth, ye are like to die!"

Here St. Leger lay,
And the boastful Baronet there;
And the painted savage horde
Crouched in their leafy lair;
And they tightened under the veil of the dark
The meshes of their snare.

But the gallant Gansevoort,
 He would not yield an ell;
Bullet for bullet he bandied them,
 And he flung them shell for shell;
And he grimly swore that he'd stand his ground
 Till the last defender fell.

From the parapet his gaze,
 In the blaze of the middle morn,
Lit on the leaguer's camp,
 And marked it silent and shorn;
Then sudden out from the wood there leaped
 A ranger wander-worn.

The back-swung gate he gained,
 And he shouted, "Herkimer!"
"Where?" cried the gallant Gansevoort;
 "He comes," quoth the wanderer,
"From the bivouac-place at Orisca's pines
 By the road through fern and fir.

“And this is the word he sends,—
 ‘Fire thou a signal gun,
And fall in force on the leaguer’s front
 Ere the noonning of the sun.’ ”
Then “volunteers!” cried Gansevoort;
 And there sprang forth many an one.

Down on the leaguer’s camp
 With a battle-shout they bore;
(Some had gone ere the gray of dawn,
 Toward the clear Orisca’s shore
To harry the hardy Herkimer
 On-pressing to the fore;)
And those of the startled leaguers left,
 I’ faith, they were smitten sore!

Hither and yon they fled,
 Impetuous, pell-mell;
While arms and stores by the triple scores
 To the valiant victors fell.
“A flag,” cried the gallant Gansevoort,
 “Of our success should tell!”

A flag? They had only heard
 What the emblem was to be,—
Of the stripes and stars as the avatars
 That should symbol liberty,
That should tell the earth of the blessed birth
 Of a people truly free!

And these undaunted souls,
 Foiled should they be? Not they!
In the cumber and clutter of battle spoils
 A keen eye saw a way
To show the foe what should work them woe
 Upon many an after day!

The folds of a camlet cloak
 To the banner brought its blue;
A British soldier's red coat lent
 The stripes of a ruddy hue;
A sheet gave white, then in the light
 Of the August noon it flew.

And O, what a cheer went up
 To the vault of the burning sky!—
Ah, many a marching year since then
 Has the fair flag waved on high!
And many another year, God please,
 Shall the same brave banner fly!

MORGAN AT COWPENS

*When, like a baleful planet-fire,
Disaster menaced, red and dire,
They bayed the foe and broke him; then
A rouse, a rouse for Morgan's men!*

Over the Carolinian skies

Are shredded clouds that the north-winds toss;
In the long-aisled forest canopies

The rime shines white on the hanging moss;
And the upland ways are frosty-wet
Back from the marge of the Pacolet!

Who goes there in the murk of the night?

Who goes there in the bleak of the dawn?

Armèd men with their bayonets bright,

Armèd men with their sabres drawn!—
Horse and footmen, with eager stride,
Pressing toward Thicketty Mountain side!

Horse and footmen, a bloody brood,
Tory and red-coat regular,
Fired with the ire of a bitter feud
Under the last pale southern star!
Tarleton, he of the evil fame,
Goading on in King George's name!

Woods before them and woods behind,
And the umbered grass of the intervalles
Where the cattle fed when the days were kind
With the spicery of the April gales!
Then broke, above them, upon the view
The silent ranks of the "buff and blue;—"

Gallant men of the Maryland line;
Colonel Washington's stout dragoons;
Rangers as staunch as the mountain pine
Bred 'neath the calm Virginian noons;
And from far Savannah and the sea
Impetuous Georgians, fain to be free!

And Daniel Morgan over them all!

There was a fighter from sole to crown,
Mighty of muscle, steel-thewed and tall,

One whose valor would never down,—
Proven to be without flaw or fleck
From yellow Yadkin to gray Quebec!

Forward the resolute red-coats come;

Might against right! Will it win the day?
Crackle of rifle and bullet's hum,

And the shouts and cheers and groans of the fray!
Back, still back, are the patriots pressed,
Back to the copse on the foothill's crest!

But then, ah, then, just at poise of the scale

Upon Freedom's side did the balance fall!

"Butcher" Tarleton may rage and rail,

Vain his wrath and his rallying call!

"The new Marcellus" has launched a blow,
And crushed the pride of the haughty foe!

Now Camden's stain is a bygone thing;
 Hope kindles clear in the heart once more;
No room for lapsing and languishing
 With fearless men like these to the fore!
My Lord Cornwallis,— a sorry grin
Will be his when his troopers come slinking in!

So the vision rises out of the past
 Of that sanguine southern winter morn
When the British standards were downward cast,
 And victory flowered from a chance forlorn;
And it's hail to them! hail to them! once again,—
Daniel Morgan, and Morgan's men!

THE SIEUR DE ROCHEFONTAINE

(St. Paul's Churchyard)

Picardy, Provence, Touraine—
Never the fair home land again
For the Sieur de Rochefontaine!

Never to lie among his own
With the soft south breezes o'er him blown
Where his stately, noble name is known!

But ever and evermore to rest,
With the alien marble above his breast,
In the clime of his youthful soldier quest.

In the tyrannous time of war and woe,
The ancient foe of his folk our foe,
Hither he came with Rochambeau.

Lace and ruffle and epaulet,
Grace and a courtier bearing, yet
A soul as valiant as Lafayette.

A valiant soul that burned to be
In the fore of the fight for liberty
With the dauntless men who would fain be free.

Just another who caught the gleam
Of the sun of Freedom's rising beam,
Who saw the vision, who dreamed the dream.

Daily Broadway's clamors and calls
Sweep by the chapel of old St. Paul's,
Its levelled graves and its ivied walls.

Here he sleeps; may his slumber be
Sweet with the great felicity
That waits, 'tis said, beyond Death's dark sea.

Never the fair home land!—and still
What matters it for a noble will
That smites for right 'gainst a giant ill ?

Ours the freedom he helped to gain;
So a plot of our free domain
For the Sieur de Rochefontaine!

THE FLAG OF THE BONHOMME RICHARD

Illustrious ensign, hail!
Thou that of yore
Didst dare the warder winds of England's shore
That Freedom might prevail!
I see thee flutter proudly at the peak,
With thine unsullied stripes and virgin stars,
Wherefrom thou seem'st to speak
To purblind kings upon their shaking thrones
Of sundered shackles and of broken bars,
Of larger love and larger liberty
Within a land that no allegiance owns
Beyond the plunge of the uneasy sea!

Above the murky gush of battle smoke,
O'er all the slaughter of the deadly scene,
When ship met ship with mortal conflict-stroke,
Still didst thou float, triumphant and serene.
Below, the grim and shotted guns
Thundered of tyranny the quaking knell;

Aloft, didst thou make strong thy bleeding sons
With thine inspiring spell,
Waving "Fight on, for all will yet be well!"

O firstling flag, thine was the prophecy
Of the great days to be!
Thou wert the omen of the glorious time
Toward which we climb.
Behold, behold, how the fleet years unveil
The heights from which thy compeers shall be cast,—
Cast to the banded blows of every gale!—
Across the perilous pathways of the Past
Illustrious ensign, hail!

THE GRAVE OF LAWRENCE

(Trinity Churchyard)

Morn and noon of day and even, human ebb and flow;
Overhead, the stars of midnight,—scarce the faintest
glow,—

Shrunk into misty marsh-fires by the city's glare;
Here he sleeps, our sailor hero,—pause and hail him fair!
Here he sleeps where jostling Wall Street merges in
Broadway,
And the roar is as a legion leaping to the fray.

Out from Trinity's dim portal floats the chanting choir;
Matchless midst the girdling granite lifts the graceful
spire.

Many slumberers around him, men of Church and State;
Here he sleeps, our sailor hero, great among the great!
Simple lines to mark his slumber; how the letters speak!
“Lawrence” (hark, ye money-getters!) “of the Chesapeake!”

Stone may call in clearer accents than the loudest lip.
Just a name! What does it cry you? “Don’t give up the
ship!”

Aye, there’s something more than millions,—a far nobler
aim!

Here he sleeps, our sailor hero, nothing but a name!
Yet (and who can pierce the future?) this may one day be
As a burning inspiration both on land and sea!

THE BELLS OF INDEPENDENCE DAY

What is it throbs adown the night
With golden falls and silvery swells?
From placid plain and slope and height
It is the pæan of the bells;

It is the echo of the note
(Hearken the vibrant midnight chime!)
From one now memorable throat
Of Revolutionary time.

“Freedom!”—the sound assailed the sky;
It filled, it thrilled the souls of men
On that far day of red July
Within the ancient home of Penn.

Then Might engirt our struggling sires;
Before it did they falter? nay!
For Right they lit their beacon fires
On windy hill, by wide sea-bay.

And on through sanguinary years,
Spurred by the bell's exultant peal,
Freely they shed their blood and tears
To win and weld the Commonweal.

Not now, as then, do foes without
With ravin menace us and wrath;
Not now, as then, does ogre Doubt
Threat the fair promise of our path.

Sea-girt, embattled, and secure,
The rise and set of sun we face;
If we but hold our purpose pure,
Who shall surpass us in the race?

If we but heed the bells!—their tale
Of how our fathers made us free,—
Then shall no human power avail
To darken our high destiny!

A VIVANDIERE

(1861)

Place, North Virgil, county of Kane;
State,—but why should we mind the state ?
'Twas a time of struggle, a time of strain;
Alas, 'twas a time of strife and hate
When the hours hung heavy and big with fate !

Sheer from the shaven crest of a pole
A virgin flag to the breeze was flung,
While a cheer like the pulse of a thunder-roll
On the sultry summer noontide rung,
And echo answered with strident tongue.

Thence into the meeting-house pressed the throng,
Filled the aisleways, and packed the pews ;
And when the strains of a martial song
Had died, then a speaker broached his views
In burning words such as patriots use.

“See!” he cried, “ ’tis the muster-list,
Blazoned bright with the county’s best!
They made haste to the trying tryst,
True to Liberty’s high behest;
Who is here that will stand the test?—

Who will sign?” But never a word
Leaped from the lips of the many score.
Was it a whispered “shame!” they heard
In a woman’s voice by the open door?
Was it a woman strode to the fore?

A woman? aye, little more than maid,
Her cheeks aglow with the rose of morn,
Her eyes aflash like the steel of a blade,
Her young lips arched with a curve of scorn!
A woman? aye, and a heroine born!

Where she signed with a steady hand
You may read (if you will) to this very day;
And where the men, in a shame-faced band,
Followed her in a spurred dismay,—
Columned names in a long array!

So, sometimes, when you're called for a toast,
 Called for a pledge to the "fairest fair,"
Forget the beauties we moderns boast,—
 The maids that the silks and satins wear,—
 And quaff the health of this *Vivandière*!

A SOLDIER

(1898)

Out of the virile North
The hale young hero came
Dreaming, as he went forth,
The star-bright dream of fame.

He dinned no vaunting cries
To plague the spacious air,
But who looked in his eyes
Knew fear was stranger there.

He nursed no callous hate,
But in his open breast
A wondrous pity sate
For them that are oppressed.

To lift them from the mire
Of tyranny and shame,
This was his high desire,
His star-bright dream of fame;

To strike one sure blow home,
And then, if need be, pass
Back to the mother-loam,
The sweet, enfolding grass.

The long, clear bugle shrilled
Across the fervid heat;
Ah, how his brave soul filled,
And how his blithe heart beat!

Up, up the tangled slope,
Where stabbed the cactus-thorn,
He pressed with comrade hope
That cloudless Cuban morn.

He struck the one sure blow,
He won the guarded steep,
Ere it was his to know
The quiet house of Sleep.

And those that gazed upon
His form, and named his name,
Saw on his face still shone
The star-bright dream of fame.

SONG FOR THE TER-CENTENARY
OF LAKE CHAMPLAIN

(JULY, 1909)

Midsummer!—and the world a full-blown flower,
This wide new world as virgin as its sod;
As wondrous seemed it that unfolding hour
As did the blossoms upon Aaron's rod!

That distant hour when first his falcon eyes
Gazed on this far out-rolling inland main,—
A flawless jewel under flawless skies,—
The knightly-hearted, valorous De Champlain.

No man of pomp, no silken courtier he,
No selfish grasper after Glory's star,
But one who wore undimmed the *fleur de lis*
Like his brave patron, Henry of Navarre!

Bred where Biscayan gales fling up the brine,
His look was level as a couchèd lance,
A valiant son of that intrepid line
Which gave fair lustre to the fame of France.

Roland and Bayard! — he was kin to these;
Swerved he no more than magnet from the pole
As forth he sailed upon the uncharted seas
With dreams of high adventure in his soul.

What foes he faced, what dangers dread he dared,—
Patient in peace, in war unwavering!
Unmoved he toiled, un murmuring he fared,
Like saintly Louis, the belovèd king.

Since then the Great Recorder of the Days
Thousands has scrolled upon his golden book,
Yet still a sheet of shimmering chrysoprase
The great lake spreads for whomso'er may look.

Behind the peaks that panoply the west
Still burn the sunsets like a mighty forge;
Still, with its voice of wandering unrest,
The swift Ausable rushes through its gorge.

Slope capping slope the awakening east along,
Vermont's broad ranges show their emerald dye;
And still, their meadows opulent with song
And glad with grain, the Hero Islands lie.

Across the water, as it breaks or broods,
In twilight purple, or in dawning gold,
Majestic from their airy altitudes
Mansfield and White Face signal as of old.

For howsoe'er man's genius bares or drapes,
Or cleaves or curbs by frowning height or shore,
Nature's sequestered elemental shapes
Preserve their primal grandeur evermore!

Grandeur and beauty!—here the twain combine,
Clothing the landscape with a varied veil;
And while before our eyes their splendors shine
Let the grave Muse of History breathe her tale!

Sea of the Iroquois! This was the path
Of those swart braves whose story casts a spell,
Who cut a swath of ruin and of wrath
Where'er in stealth their vengeful footsteps fell.

As wise as wary they! Yon shadowy cove
Once caught the glimmer of their council-flames;
And yonder, in that dim primeval grove,
They lurked to gain their sanguinary aims.

Then came Champlain and gallant Frontenac,
As daring as the keen conquistador,
And ever, where they voyaged, upon their track
Trailed, like a banner, the black smoke of war.

England and France! the vision will not pale;—
The lilied oriflamme, the double cross;
“Saint George!” and “Saint Denis!”—adown the gale
Surge upon surge the cries of conflict toss.

Ticonderoga felt the bloody brunt,
And grizzly cannon roared their deafening psalm,
When Abercrombie flung his fearless front
Upon the bristling bastions of Montcalm.

Another thrilling scene that fortress knew
When, ere the Maytime morning's earliest glow,
Bold Ethan Allen and his fearless few
Seized its embattled walls without a blow.

Still can we hear him;—in the gray light see
The firm-set features of his mountain boys;
“Up with your firelocks, you who'll follow me!”
And every soldier held his gun at poise.

Here Arnold strove,—(alas, the later hour
That stained a patriot name aforetime pure!)
Whelmed, yet undaunted, by the foeman's power
Beneath thy coppiced headlands, green Valcour!

With triumph vision, on exultant feet,
Here passed Burgoyne and his imposing train
To that grim day of desperate defeat
On Saratoga's memorable plain.

And here McDonough, prince of sailors he,
Resting his cause with the Almighty Will,
Hewed a red path to fame and victory
While from the shrouds a game-cock clarioned shrill.

Ah, pageant of the past! the trump, the fife,
The reeling shock of arms, to-day are banned;
Down closing vistas fade the stress and strife;
Now concord reigns, fair Gateway of the Land!

Three hundred years! How wide a space of time,
Yet we may cross it on the Bridge of Dream,
And very real, though none the less sublime,
Transcendent figures such as Shakespere seem!

The great are not remote. Their statures loom,
Although they lie in moss-encrusted graves;
So view we him who, with the year at bloom,
Here led to battle his Algonquin braves.

Stanch De Champlain! he of the questing soul
And the impetuous heart!—ah, who shall say
If he beheld not back the lustrums roll
With revelations of our broader day?

For his we know was the unleashed surmise,
The lofty impulse, the inspiring thought,
Yet must we doubt if his presaging eyes
Divined the wonders that mankind has wrought.

His fragile shallop—'tis a steam-spiced barque!
His forest torch—'tis an electric globe!
A touch, and lo, an emanating spark
As surely fatal as was Nessus' robe!

Speech flies through space as though on spirit wings;
We dive beneath the sea; we cleave the air;
Beyond the portal of what unseen things
May not tomorrow's new explorers fare!

And yet the old—the dauntless De Champlains!—
Let us be mindful of the debt we owe!
A splendid ichor coursed along their veins;
They quailed nor faltered whatsoe'er the blow!

Meagre their tools, and starveling were their aids,
Yet mark the marvel of their fruitful deeds!—
On verdured banks, in fertile-bosomed glades,
We reap the harvest where they sowed the seeds.

Then hail them, heroes of an elder hour!
Death's mandate only bade their struggles cease;
Still be their memory as a fadeless flower
As march the centuries toward the Bourne of Peace!

ON A BUST OF LINCOLN

This was a man of mighty mould
Who walked erewhile our earthly ways,
Fashioned as leaders were of old
In the heroic days!

Mark how austere the rugged height
Of brow—a will not wrought to bend!
Yet in the eyes behold the light
That made the foe a friend!

Sagacious he beyond the test
Of quibbling schools that praise or ban;
Supreme in all the broadest, best,
We hail American.

When bronze is but as ash to flame,
And marble but as wind-blown chaff,
Still shall the lustre of his name
Stand as his cenotaph!

AT TENNENT CHURCH

(Monmouth Battlefield)

As on the summer Sabbath that saw the roll
O'er Monmouth's fields the sulphurous battle murk,
Down from its grassy, grave-engirdled knoll
Looks Tennent's ancient kirk.

They smote and open flung yon very door
To bear the wounded from the sanguine flood;
Still show—ah, glorious baptism—on the floor
Grim stains of patriot blood!

Along that undulant highway Washington
Rode up the panic and defeat to quell;
Beyond that slope-crest where the cattle run
Is brave Moll Pitcher's well!

Again we see it all as here we stand,
The bitter travail and the strife profound;
To us whose birthright is this noble land
This spot is hallowed ground!

HUNTLEY OF THE CASTINE

Not on the quarter-deck alone
Are the battle's bravest heroes known;
Not by the man behind the gun
Are the glorious victories always won;
Valor hideth a blade as keen
Out of sight of the martial scene,
Where are doughty deeds of daring done
Like Huntley's,—Huntley of the *Castine*!

When the little gunboat darted at dawn,
With her fluttering starry flag at peak,
Under the wall of San Juan—
San Juan of Porto Rique—
She seemed like a living, conscious thing
With the battle-passion quivering;
At fullest speed, with her screws a-spin,
And her batteries roaring, she hurried in,
Leaping—the baby of all the fleet—
Her furnaces glowing with fury heat.

Suddenly rose in the deepest hold,—
Down in the vessel's throbbing heart,—
A sound to test the soul of the bold,
To make the bravest blanch and start—
Not the noise of a dream, but the hiss of steam,
A socket bolt sprung loose in a seam!

“Quick! Bank the fire! Quick! Bank the fire!”
Cries fearless Huntley, man of the hour.
He will save from destruction dire,
Save, if it lies within mortal power.
The stokers heave with laboring breath
In a desperate fight with a demon death.

Into that reeking pit he dares,
Huntley,—Huntley of the *Castine*;
(O for a waft of God's fresh sweet airs
And the sea and the heavens clear and clean!)
Pass the minutes—one—two—and three;
To him and his comrades each seems to be

A separate eternity,
The while 'mid the heat and the stifling fume
He tightens the bolt that is threatening doom;
Then forth they hale him to see him lie
Prone before them with lidded eye,—
Nay, nay, but he did not die!

He did not die, and when up to the blue
Of the sky they bore him with reverent mien,
And he roused and gazed on the flag that flew
O'er the blare and blaze of the battle scene,
And smiled, how they cheered him, that valiant crew!
Shall we not join in the cheering too
For Huntley,—the hero of the *Castine*!



THE GRAVE OF LAFAYETTE

Not far from Paris' troubled heart,—

Its throbs and throes,—

A holy ground-plot set apart

Gray walls enclose;

One place in that gay world of sham

Sans blot or blur,—

The quiet convent of *Les Dames*

Du Sacré Coeur!

Pass but the ancient door, and there

What vestal peace!

From all the world of woe and care

A rapt release.

And there, beyond where brilliant blooms

In soft airs wave,

Behold, engirt by lofty tombs,

A modest grave!

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A simple slab—no shaft of fame—
Whereon is set
A hero's name,—the noble name
Of Lafayette.

On him but niggard meed of praise
His own bestow;
With us, remembering bygone days,
Be it not so!

When his were love and fortune,—all
To make youth sweet,
When life spread, one rich festival,
Before his feet;

He left the pleasant primrose-bowers,
The paths of ease,
And sought a soldier's arduous hours
Far o'er the seas.

Within his high, impulsive heart
Burned freedom's flame,
And he espoused the patriots' part
With ardent aim.

He fought unfaltering till the end,—
The goal,—was won;
The fearless and the faithful friend
Of Washington.

Ah, how his deeds of dauntless will
Still starlike shine!
Yorktown and Monmouth! Barren Hill
And Brandywine!

Then honor to the true, the brave!
His due—our debt!
Wreathed immortelles upon the grave
Of Lafayette!

O HERO OF THE SAXON NAME

(Colonel H. C. Egbert)

O hero of the Saxon name,—
A noble name without a blur,—
Upon our valor-roll your fame
Is writ in fadeless character.

For from the first hard-foughten field,
Unto the last beyond the sea,
You faced the foemen with no shield
Save your undaunted bravery.

Ah, Fate has truly tragic ways,
Willing that you who knew the stress
Of Spottsylvania's lurid maze,
And all the awful Wilderness;

Who passed, unscathed, Death's darkling wiles,
Should meet a sanguine doom, and fall
In the far, treacherous tropic isles
Beneath a Tagal rifle-ball!

“I am too old!” you said, “too old!”
Unto the general, bending nigh;
Nay, nay, O soldier stanch and bold,
You were too young, too young to die!

For we have need of such as you,
Who, howsoe’er the years depart,
Unswerving as the pole, and true,
Keep evermore their youth at heart.

But we must bow before His will
Whose word is as a choiring flame;
Yet shall your deeds be potent still,
O hero of the Saxon name!

BALLAD OF CALVIN TITUS

(August, 1900)

Calvin Titus, you're the boy,
Just a bugler though you be,
And we send you our "ahoy!"—
Waft it far across the sea.

Prairie-born although you are,
Not a tittle matters it;
All who fight beneath our star
Show the same true Yankee grit.

North or south or east or west,
Still there's one to bear the brunt,
Like the sergeant, bold of breast,
Before Moultrie's battered front.

When the yellow Mongol horde
Girdled our undaunted few,
When the bullets fiercer poured,
And when famine closer drew,

It was you who led the hope,
 Having shrilled the forward call;
It was you first swarmed the rope
 To the summit of the wall;

It was you who planted there,
 All that tragic stress above,—
Flung upon the alien air,—
 The fair banner that we love.

So we send you our “ahoy!”—
 Waft it far across the sea;
Calvin Titus, you’re the boy,
 Just a bugler though you be!

THE LAST OF OUR FIGHTING LINE

Perry and Porter and Bainbridge, hail,
Men of an elder day,
Heroes who feared neither gun nor gale,
Bold in the fiery fray!
Jones, the first of our sons of the sea,
Farragut, bred to the brine,—
Cheers for them all, but a three times three
For the last of our fighting line!

What did the valiant Commodore do?
Swift at the peal of war
He sailed the orient sea-drift through
For the isle Corregidor;
Ran the forts with a laugh of scorn
At the dreaded Spanish mine,
And lay in the bay at the burst of morn,—
The last of our fighting line!

Olympia, Boston and Baltimore,—

A gallant squadron they!

And they shelled the ships and they shelled the shore,

And they silenced Cavité;

And while the shot went hurtling by

With a deadly whir and whine,

He watched from the bridge with a kindling eye,—

The last of our fighting line!

Shattered and sunk and beached and burned,

Woe for the ships of Spain!

Never a prow to be homeward turned

Over the restless main!

A glorious victory! What of the cost?

Lo, not a single sign,

For not a man of the fleet was lost

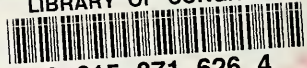
By the last of our fighting line!

*Perry and Porter and Bainbridge, hail,
Men of an elder day,
Heroes who feared neither gun nor gale,
Bold in the fiery fray!
Jones, the first of our sons of the sea,
Farragut, bred to the brine,—
Cheers for them all, but a three times three
For the last of our fighting line!*

*Tears for the weaklings! but for those who fought
And perished nobly upon land or wave,
No lamentation, no dark draperies brought,
No sad songs for the brave!*

*But rather jubilation,—peal on peal
Of joy-bells,—Hope's white lilies 'neath the sun,—
Because they died with sacrificial zeal,
Their patriot duty done!*

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